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## Des Moines Metro Driving Less

**DES MOINES** – Residents of Greater Des Moines are driving less therefore reducing energy consumption, transportation-related emissions, congestion and the occurrence of crashes.

A recently released report by the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) indicates collectively the three-county region has seen a 3.7% decline compared to the national 0.6% decline in the number of miles driven per capita between 2012 to 2013. Crashes are down 22% from 2003 until 2012. Nationally, evidence suggests the decline is likely due to several factors:

- Changing demographics as young people and the growing number of seniors are driving less and seeking alternative transportation including transit to get around
- A rising preference for compact, mixed-use neighborhoods which reduce the need for driving

Unlike past dips, this sustained decline has decoupled any connection to economic trends as the Des Metro GDP has increased in recent years. The MPO report compares driving trends by county since 1990 as well as breaks down annual per capita vehicle miles traveled since 2008 for each of the MPO's 19 member government communities.

This downward trend in driving impacts investment priorities of area communities and how local and state governments view future travel needs. The MPO's recently adopted [Mobilizing Tomorrow](#), a long range transportation plan, addresses this trend by recommending greater investment in maintaining the current transportation system and increasing the availability of alternative modes of transportation such as public transit and bicycling. [The Tomorrow Plan](#), a regional plan adopted on 2013, also recommends creating more mixed use, walkable developments. Both plans aim to continue to promote strategies to reduce driving in the region therefore decreasing transportation costs, improving public safety and public health, and decreasing transportation-related emissions.

Click here to view the report: [Many the Miles](#)

**The Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)** Acts as a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. The MPO develops both long- and short-range multimodal transportation plans, selects and approves projects for federal funding based upon regional priorities, and develops methods to reduce traffic congestion.